

SPECIAL ISSUE

# Wine & Spirits

TOP  
100  
WINERIES  
+  
BEST  
BUYS

34TH  
ANNUAL  
BUYING  
GUIDE



WINTER 2020  
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# Wine & Spirits

# PREMIER CRU

*The wineries  
that have  
earned the  
most Top 100  
awards*

Each winery appears with the number of Top 100 awards earned since the first Buying Guide for 1988, through this, the 34th, for 2021. The year of the most recent award appears in parentheses.

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**Penfolds (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Grange Bin 95,  
St. Henri Shiraz

23

**Marchesi Antinori (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Solaia, Tignanello

21

**Ridge (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Geyserville, Monte Bello

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**Louis Jadot (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Chevalier-Montrachet,  
Echezeaux

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**Concha y Toro (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Carmín de Peumo  
Carmenère, Terrunyo  
Pirque Viejo Cabernet

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**Chateau Ste. Michelle (2017)**  
Benchmarks:  
Eroica, Eroica Gold

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**Boutari (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Naoussa Grande  
Reserve, Santorini

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**Bouchard Père & Fils (2021)**  
Benchmarks:  
Beaune Vigne de l'Enfant  
Jésus, Beaune Clos de la  
Mousse

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**Diamond Creek (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Cabernet from Volcanic Hill and Gravelly Meadow

**Iron Horse (2019)**

Benchmarks:  
Brut LD, Joy!

**Louis Roederer (2020)**

Benchmarks:  
Cristal Brut, Vintage Brut Nature Philippe Starck

**Shafer (2015)**

Benchmarks:  
Hillside Select and One Point Five cabernets

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**Krug (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Clos du Mesnil, Grande Cuvée Champagnes

**von Strasser (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Diamond Mountain District Napa Valley Reserve, Diamond Mountain District Cabernet

**Williams Selyem (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Pinot noir from Rochioli Riverblock and Weir

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**L'Ecole N° 41 (2020)**

Benchmarks:  
Pepper Bridge Vineyard Apogee, Seven Hills Perigee

**Storybook Mountain (2020)**

Benchmarks:  
Napa Valley Estate Reserve Zinfandel, Eastern Exposures Zinfandel

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**E. Guigal (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Côte-Rôtie Château d'Ampuis, Condrieu La Doriane

**Joseph Phelps (2017)**

Benchmarks:  
Napa Valley Insignia, Napa Valley Merlot

**Maximin Grünhaus (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Mosel rieslings from Abtberg and Herrenberg

**Qupé (2015)**

Benchmarks:  
Bien Nacido Hillside Estate Syrah and Block 11 Chardonnay

**Andrew Will (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Horse Heaven Hills Sorella, Yakima Two Blondes

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**Catena Zapata (2020)**

Benchmarks:  
Mendoza Alta Malbec, Adrianna Malbec

**Gary Farrell (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Russian River Valley Rochioli Vineyard pinot noir and chardonnay

**Flowers (2015)**

Benchmarks:  
Camp Meeting Ridge Chardonnay, Sea View Ridge Pinot Noir

**Ravenswood (2020)**

Benchmarks:  
Sonoma Valley Old Hill and Dry Creek Valley Teldeschi Vineyard zinfandels

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**Beringer (2014)**

Benchmarks:  
Napa Valley Private Reserve and Knights Valley cabernet sauvignons

**Cune (2017)**

Benchmarks:  
Imperial Gran Reserva, Viña Real Gran Reserva

**De Loach (2013)**

Benchmarks:  
Russian River Valley pinot noir, OFS Zinfandel

**King Estate (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Willamette Valley Backbone Pinot Gris, Domaine Pinot Noir

**Dr. Loosen (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Mosel rieslings from Wehlener Sonnenuhr and Urziger Würzgarten

**Robert Mondavi Winery (2019)**

Benchmarks:  
Napa Valley Reserve Cabernet, Oakville To Kalon Fumé Blanc

**Niepoort (2016)**

Benchmarks:  
Douro Charme, Colheita Port

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**Aveleda (2012)**

Benchmarks:  
Quinta da Avelada Vinho Verde and Alvarinho

**Henschke (2017)**

Benchmarks:  
Eden Valley Hill of Grace, Cyril Henschke Cabernet

**Roederer Estate (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Anderson Valley L'Ermitage and L'Ermitage Rosé

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**d'Arenberg (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
McLaren Vale The Dead Arm Shiraz, The Twenty Eight Road Mourvedre

**Frog's Leap (2018)**

Benchmarks:  
Rutherford Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley Zinfandel

**Kendall-Jackson (2012)**

Benchmarks:  
Alexander Valley Hawk-eye Mountain and Knights Valley Trace Ridge cabernets

**Luis Pato (2020)**

Benchmarks:  
Bairrada Quinta do Ribeirinho Baga Pé Franco, Monopolo Vinha Centenaria Vinha Barrosa

**Stag's Leap Wine Cellars (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
S.L.V., Fay and Cask 23 cabernet sauvignon

**Robert Weil (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Rheingau rieslings from Kiedrich Gräfenberg

**Hermann J. Wiemer (2021)**

Benchmarks:  
Seneca Lake Dry Riesling, Magdalena Vineyard Riesling

**Yalumba (2019)**

Benchmarks:  
Eden Valley The Virgilius Viognier, Barossa Old Bush Vine Grenache

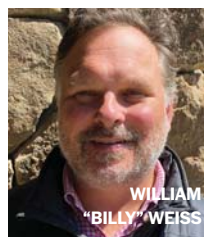
# IMPORTERS



ROB BUONO



MONIKA CAHA & TONI SILVER



WILLIAM "BILLY" WEISS



MICHAEL QUINTTUS

IF YOU'VE EVER seen a sommelier inspecting an unfamiliar bottle with awe, you've probably noticed them spinning the bottle and squinting at the back label. They're checking for the importer—the often unsung hero that works as the sommelier to the sommeliers, meeting producers and bringing their wines into the US. We've parsed the last 12 months of our tastings for the importers with the most noteworthy wines—yet another good reason to spin the bottle.

—JARED HOOPER

## Old Bridge Cellars

NAPA, CA

### Standouts in Australian Wine

Originally founded by Australian expat Rob MacDonald, Old Bridge Cellars has expanded under the ownership of Carlos Alvarez (of Corona beer), who purchased it in 2003. Rob Buono has been at the helm of Old Bridge since 2004, working with Aussie-born Gavin Speight to build the portfolio, extending into New Zealand, France and California. They focus on wines from independently owned estates in Australia, such as d'Arenberg, Cullen and Chambers Rosewood, all represented in this issue.

## Monika Caha Selections

NEW YORK, NY

### Specialists in Austrian Wine

Austrian-born chef Monika Caha ran *Kaffehaus* in NYC for five years. She returned to Austria after 9/11, coming back to New York in 2003 with a handful of Austrian producers and a plan to represent them in the US—and oh, did she. Her portfolio, run with co-owner Toni Silver, is a master class in Austrian terroirs, from the Wachau to the southern reaches of Styria. In this issue, look for Forstreiter, Handwerk and Stadlmann.

## North Berkeley Imports

BERKELEY, CA

### A Burgundy Powerhouse with Depth in Italy

Originally established in 1979, North Berkeley Wine was on the Shattuck Avenue scene just a few doors down from *Chez Panisse* in Berkeley. In 1999, Billy Weiss purchased the store, grew its domestic national wholesale portfolio and expanded its imports. It's now known especially for stellar niche Champagne (see Jean Vesselle, a Top 100 Winery) and Burgundy, with producers such as Frédéric Magnien, Pousse d'Or and Remoissenet celebrated in this issue. Their Italians in the issue are led by Rocca de Montegrossi.

## Vintus

NEW YORK, NY

### From Northern France to the Rhône and on to Italy

Sixth-time back-to-back Importer of the Year winner Michael Quinttus founded Vintus in 2004 after years as a portfolio manager at Kobrand. Striking out on his own, he sought to build a small collection of family-owned estates from all over the world. The portfolio now includes legendary producers such as Bollinger in Champagne, Chanson and Lucien Le Moine in Burgundy and Rhône legend E. Guigal (a 14-time Top 100 Winery), as well as new names like Rotem and Mounir Saouma in Châteauneuf-du-Pape (p. 53). In Piedmont, it's Sandrone; in Bolgheri, Le Macchiole.





Wine & Spirits

# TOP 100 WINERIES OF 2020

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME one of the Top 100 Wineries of the Year?

Great wine, for sure, but more than that, consistency and devotion—the sort that enables a team to produce a range of exceptional wines in a single year. It starts with farming, whether in estate vineyards or those of talented growers. It extends to the winery, where care and attention transforms that fruit into wine without losing a sense of what it is and where it grew. And it includes the people, without whom none of the magic would happen.

This is why we celebrate the wineries that have a track record for producing exceptional wines, as revealed through our tastings. Here are the W&S Top 100 Wineries of 2020.

*Reported by Patrick J. Comiskey, Joshua Greene, Stephanie Johnson, Sydney Love, Susannah Smith, Tara Q. Thomas and Corey Warren.*

*Photograph by MAURIZIO DI IORIO*

## Rose & Arrow

OREGON | WILLAMETTE VALLEY

*Rose & Arrow wines are designed from the ground up, built around the subterranean discoveries of geologist Pedro Parra.*



FELIPE RAMIREZ

MARK TARLOV AND LOUIS-MICHEL LIGER-BELAIR founded Chapter 24 in 2012, basing most of their output on two wines—Fire, channeling the volcanic terroirs of the Willamette Valley, and Flood, grown in soils left by melting glaciers at the end of the last Ice Age. When, in 2014, Tarlov invited Chilean wine geologist Pedro Parra to consult for the brand, his discoveries could not be contained in the old model. Parra began to deconstruct Oregon's underground, isolating the edges of lava flows at different moments in their evolution from rock to soil. The more attention he paid, the more variations he found in places once thought to be uniform. In 2015, Chapter 24 launched Rose & Arrow, focused on wines that live in these margins, built from vineyard sectors determined not by row or aspect but by subterranean logic. Felipe Ramirez, who worked with Liger-Belair and Parra in Burgundy, has been the winemaker on the ground since 2016, taking over fully since Liger-Belair left the team in 2019. He uses ambient yeasts to ferment the wines, and does not fine or filter them. "I have to listen," he says of his effort to keep ego out of the process. "The amount of information from each vineyard is amazing. Each tank is like an ecosystem of place." —P.J.C.



**FOUNDED:**  
2012

**OWNERS:**  
Mark Tarlov,  
Ian Lombard

**WINEMAKER:**  
Felipe Ramirez

**VITICULTURISTS:**  
Netanya Welch,  
Pedro Parra  
consulting

**ACRES OWNED:**  
155 (long lease)

**ANNUAL  
PRODUCTION:**  
1,800 cases

**ESTATE GROWN:**  
100%

**2018 Eola-Amity Hills Hopewell Hills Gathered Stones Pinot Noir (\$150, 96 points)** Studying the soils at Hopewell Hills, Parra found a lot of vesicles—tiny bubbles in the fractured basalt. He believes the vesicles help optimize the nutrient pathways from the soil to the vine roots. In fact, that ground provides a wine of stunning complexity and fulsome flavor. Its aromas are reminiscent of an Indian bazaar—cardamom, garam masala, ginger, chai, and spiced cacao—earthbound and compelling.

**2018 Dundee Hills Worden Hill Pinot Noir (\$75, 94 points)** This estate vineyard is the remnant of an ancient landslide in the Dundee Hills, the rock still weathering into soil. This wine is simple and gorgeous, all smoke and earthy red dust, dark plum and black cherry, with the feel of a leather glove warmed by sunshine.

**2018 Dundee Hills Worden Hill 1st Red Dust Pinot Noir, (\$150, 94 points)** Pedro Parra isolated this pocket of basalt loam, a mélange flecked with pebbles, for a "First Expression" from Worden Hill. The wine's dark-plum flavors are limned with cigar box notes, opening toward a nutty, walnut skin savor. The texture is suave and completely seductive, the wine a burst of cherry flavors seen through a walnut sepiatone.



MARCUS NOTARO

## Stag's Leap Wine Cellars

CALIFORNIA | NAPA VALLEY

*Marcus Notaro's epic 2017s celebrate the 50th anniversary of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars.*

THE 2017 VINTAGE IN NAPA VALLEY WAS A SEASON of extremes. After years of drought, a winter of drenching rain brought a burst of energy to plants throughout the valley and into the hills. Then the heat came, peaking at 106°F on September 2. According to Marcus Notaro, who had known only drought since he started making the wines at SLWC in 2013, the Fay Vineyard, planted on an ancient creek bed with vine rows tracking the sun from east to west, was hit harder by the heat spikes than S.L.V., the vineyard Warren Winiarski had planted on the bench of the Stags Leap Escarpment and higher up into the hillside. He recalls that most of the lots that made it into the 2017 Fay were still resting with their grape skins when wildfires took out the winery's electricity on October 8. Notaro had to find "creative cooling and fermentation techniques," as the cooling system had stopped functioning. "I drained off a couple of these tanks by gravity, with flashlights and no power, the day after the fire," he recalls. The unusual conditions created a different relationship between the two estate vineyards as he set out to blend Cask 23, a wine that has combined the best characteristics of both vineyards since 1990. —J.G.



**FOUNDED:**  
1970

**OWNERS:**  
Ste. Michelle  
Wine Estates,  
Marchesi Antinori

**WINEMAKER:**  
Marcus Notaro

**VITICULTURIST:**  
Kirk Grace

**ACRES OWNED:**  
262

**ANNUAL  
PRODUCTION:**  
140,000 cases

**ESTATE GROWN:**  
100% for S.L.V.,  
Fay and Cask 23

**2017 Napa Valley Fay Cabernet Sauvignon (\$150, 95 points)** Fay is usually the austere sibling to S.L.V. In 2017, between the early reserves of water in the soil and September's extreme heat, those lean curves turned voluptuous. It's an elegant beauty, svelte, with complexity that pours out long after each taste. If the wine Warren Winiarski tasted from Fay in 1969 was anything like this, it's easy to understand why he bought the land next door. (3,140 cases)

**2017 Napa Valley Cask 23 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$295, 95 points)** This vintage of Cask 23 has a cool concentration that speaks more of spring than of the late August heat. The blend is 52 percent from S.L.V. and 48 percent from Fay, aged almost two years in new French oak barrels. The tannins are rich, the aroma smoky, but the bright liveliness of the flavor—the persimmon, cherry and fresh tobacco—shines through. (2,500 cases)

**2017 Napa Valley S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon (\$195, 93 points)** The rocky hillside soils of S.L.V. produced a dark and savory cabernet in 2017, with peppery intensity, and youthful flavors of blackberries highlighting the dark-chocolate succulence of the tannins. (2,096 cases)



# d'Arenberg

AUSTRALIA | MCLAREN VALE

*Tradition and innovation define a dual identity at d'Arenberg.*



CHESTER OSBORN

THE ARRAY OF D'ARENBERG WINES IS A WINDOW into the complexity of this venerable estate currently helmed by fourth-generation owner-winemaker, Chester Osborn. Steeped in winery history, Osborn is a lover of modern art and an aspiring author (he dreams of penning a sci-fi novel titled *The Unbelievable Grenache*). That multidirectional focus is visible in the wines as well: Many are single-site bottlings, while Osborn's top wine, the Dead Arm Shiraz, is a blend of old-vine fruit from across the estate's vineyards. The multiple personalities of his portfolio range from dense, blue-fruited old-vine shiraz, along with its Rhôneish sisters, grenache and mourvèdre, to sagrantino, nero d'avola, aglianico, montepulciano, carmenère, durif, mencia, tempranillo, souzão... And the list goes on. In all, 37 varieties of vines drag nutrients from the loam and quartz-and-ironstone-riddled clay of McLaren Vale. Osborn presents the wines from the latest additions in the context of human-influenced climate change: His grandfather farmed shiraz and grenache while he finds himself exploring varieties that may, someday, outperform them in McLaren Vale. —S.E.S.



**FOUNDED:**

1912

**OWNERS:**

d'Arry & Chester Osborn

**WINEMAKER/**

**VITICULTURIST:**  
Chester Osborn

**ACRES OWNED:**

450

**ANNUAL**

**PRODUCTION:**

250,000 cases

**ESTATE GROWN:**

65%

**IMPORTER:**

Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA

**2016 McLaren Vale Shiraz The Dead Arm (\$65, 94 points)** The Dead Arm is Chester Osborn's paean to his old vines struggling with *Eutypa lata*, a fungus that kills one of the canes, leaving the vine to produce a more limited and concentrated crop. He makes this in small open-top vats, foot-treading the fermenting must, then using a basket press and a mix of new and old French and American oak barrels to finish it. Bottled without fining or filtering, it's a potent red with the ripe sunbaked-strawberry and fresh purple fruit flavors of McLaren Vale, bold and intense yet floral, cool and friendly. This is built to age for a decade or more as it slowly unfolds its outer layers and reveals its core.

**2018 McLaren Vale Mencia The Anthropocene Epoch (\$29, 93 points)** This youthful mencia has a full robe of color and a velvet-rich texture, layering purple plum and notes of game in a brisk and spicy wine. Reductive at first, it opens to fruit intensity without excess weight, leaving a cool, graceful impression.

**2015 McLaren Vale Tempranillo Grenache Tinta Cão Souzao Sticks and Stones (\$29, 93 points)** This combines four varieties from northern Iberia, taking a svelte shape that's completely different from that of McLaren Vale shiraz. The flavors are gamey and meaty, with a twangy reverb in their smoky spice.

# Bindi

AUSTRALIA | VICTORIA

*With precise, vivid wines, Bindi raises the bar for chardonnay and pinot noir south of the Equator.*



MICHAEL DHILLON

THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON WITH New World chardonnay these days. Whether it's a shift in style or vines maturing, quality has been rising around the globe for this popular grape. One cool spot for chardonnay at the moment is Victoria's Macedon Ranges, 30 miles outside of Melbourne. It is, in fact, Australia's coolest mainland wine region, the home of Bindi Wines, where Michael Dhillon works 19 acres of vines, producing a range of fine chardonnays and pinot noirs. With sustainable farming practices and low-interventionist winemaking—ambient-yeast fermentation, gentle pressing, long lees aging in French oak with minimal racking and filtration, no fining—Dhillon sets a high standard for purity of site expression. —S.E.S.



**2018 Chardonnay Macedon Ranges Kostas Rind (\$57, 94 points)** From 30-year-old vines planted in quartz-flecked volcanic soils, this chardonnay is spontaneously fermented and aged in French oak barrels (25 percent new). Deftly melding that oak influence into its nuanced depths of flavor—quince and white cranberry, some ginger and lime—the wine comes together with a complexity that feels naked and clean, with the petrichor scent of a cooling rain. This is an exciting New World chardonnay, expressing its soil with delicacy and precision.

**2017 Chardonnay Macedon Ranges Quartz (\$120, 93 points)** This 1.25-acre block of chardonnay stands apart for the shattered quartz in the soil. The yields are extremely low, and Dhillon ferments allows the wine a bit more new oak (35 percent of the barrels) than he does in the Kostas Rind. This wine's depth of flavor is almost meaty, with a mineral rub to its spicy power. The youthfully reductive notes of persimmon and green herb would complement a shellfish stew, in a combination of mineral tension and satisfying richness.

**2017 Pinot Noir Macedon Ranges Original Vineyard (\$120, 93 points)** Three acres of pinot noir planted in 1988 on a north-facing slope of quartz and volcanic soils give the fruit for this zesty pinot noir. Dhillon ages it for 15 months in French oak; 25 percent of the barrels are new and 100 percent of the wine is firm, juicy and cool, its high-acid fruit showing the underside of ripeness in notes of red currants, mint and the tart red flesh of a peach by the pit. While this is a little steely and hard at the moment, it's possible to taste the wine's future as it opens, sustaining its cool, fresh length of flavor.

**FOUNDED:**

1988

**OWNER:**

The Dhillon family

**WINEMAKER/**

**VITICULTURIST:**  
Michael Dhillon

**ACRES OWNED:**

19

**ANNUAL**

**PRODUCTION:**

2,250 cases

**ESTATE GROWN:**

100%

**IMPORTER:**

Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ

# Chambers Rosewood

AUSTRALIA | RUTHERGLEN

*Stephen Chambers's range of classic Rutherglen stickies offers palpable, drinkable history.*



STEPHEN CHAMBERS

STEPHEN CHAMBERS IS THE SIXTH-GENERATION winemaker at his family's estate—a common enough story in Europe, but not so much in the New World. When I asked him how many harvests were represented in the bottle of Grand Muscat I held in my hand, his answer was 80-some, the work of four separate generations of Chamberses. The depth and complexity on offer when material is that old and varied is what routinely puts these wines in our top tier. That Grand Muscat's oldest material dates to the 1930s, set down by third-generation winemaker William Henry Chambers. Taken further, the Rare Muscat includes roughly 50 vintages in each bottle, the oldest from the 1890s, right after phylloxera-induced replanting—and was made by William Henry as well. Stephen has maintained the Chambers patrimony since 2001, repairing the heirloom barrels, farming their old vines and, each year, fortifying new wines for the cellar before blending limited amounts of older wines for release. When you open these ancient treasures, parse out small sips over the course of several weeks to enjoy the transformation of flavors. —S.E.S



**FOUNDED:**  
1858

**OWNERS:**  
The Chambers family

**WINEMAKER:**  
Stephen Chambers

**VITICULTURIST:**  
Wayne Petrie

**ACRES OWNED:**  
100

**ANNUAL**

**PRODUCTION:**  
N/A

**ESTATE GROWN:**  
90%

**IMPORTER:**  
Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA

**Rutherglen Rare Muscat (\$350, 95 points)**

This dessert wine is extraordinarily savory up front, with a beautiful, lifted sharpness to the flavor that's striking in a wine of this age, color and sugar level. That moment of verticality sets up a long, slow denouement of citrus and stone fruit and smoky, bitter praline. All autumn sunshine, the wine's vibrancy and supple textures gain ground after a month, even if the initial scent of roses is gone.

**Rutherglen Grand Muscat (\$100, 93 points)**

Fruity and bright, with an apricot and nectarine freshness that seems improbable for a wine composed of elements dating back 90 years, this has an elastic tension that keeps the texture lively, even as warm wood spice lengthens the delicate fruit in the end. This is the color of a *cannelé*, and deliciously echoes that treat's burnt-sugar notes.

**Rutherglen Grand Muscadelle (\$140, 93 points)**

This is the ghost of a dripping ripe summer peach, its wealth of sweet fruit now shaded in autumn tones of russet and scarlet red, lasting on golden-raisin freshness. Stephen Chambers blends this from barrels in his cellar dating back to World War I: It's a massive, treacle-sweet wine to serve with candied hazelnuts and pecans, roasted walnuts or banana bread. All those flavors are there, wrapped up in the saturated texture of the wine.

# Concha y Toro

CHILE

*Exploring the geology of Andean vineyards and far-coast sites, Concha y Toro produces many of Chile's greatest wines.*



MARCELO PAPA

TWO GENERATIONS AFTER EDUARDO GUILISASTI Gana set out to expand Concha y Toro, the largest wine producer in Chile remains a family affair. Run today by his eldest son, Eduardo, Concha y Toro has built one of the strongest benches of winemaking talent in the world, first tapping Pablo Morandé and then Ignacio Recabarren to build the company's top wines. They then trained the next generation, including current technical director Marcelo Papa and Enrique Tirado, the lead winemaker at Don Melchor. They, in turn, have mentored the youngest members of the team, including Isabel Mitarakis Guilisasti, who made Concha y Toro's top-scoring wine this year, the 2017 Gravas del Maipo cabernet. It grows in Puente Alto, on an alluvial terrace above the north bank of the Maipo River. The firm purchased the Tocornal Vineyard in the 1960s and has since propagated a range of siblings from its gravel soils, including Don Melchor and Almaviva, the latter a joint venture with Baron Philippe de Rothschild. Recently, Marcelo Papa's Marques de Casa Concha cabernets from Puente Alto have stood head to head with those two, as does Gravas. —J.G.



**FOUNDED:**  
1883

**OWNER:**  
Viña Concha y Toro, a public company

**TECHNICAL**

**DIRECTOR:**  
Marcelo Papa

**VITICULTURIST:**  
Max Larrain

**ACRES OWNED:**  
22,652 (in Chile)

**ANNUAL**

**PRODUCTION:**  
33 million cases

**ESTATE GROWN:**  
50% for Casillero line and above

**IMPORTER:**  
Fetzer Vineyards, Hopland, CA

**2017 Puente Alto Gravas del Maipo Cabernet Sauvignon (\$70, 95 points)**

Isabel Mitarakis makes this wine from the Don Melchor sector of the original Tocornal Vineyard, working with the younger vines planted between 1985 and 1992. It's a silken Maipo cabernet, Andean in its refreshing mint and rosemary notes, layering cool flavors of strawberries and plums in a nuanced, dynamic and quietly gracious wine.

**2017 Pirque Terrunyo Block Pirque Viejo Cabernet Sauvignon (\$40, 93 points)**

Pirque Viejo is one of Concha y Toro's oldest vineyards, a rocky terrace at the base of the Andes on the south bank of the Maipo River. Replanted between 2003 and 2008, the vineyard provided a clean and pure 2017, the flavors lasting with stamina as they rise from low, earthy bass notes to smoky tenors and strawberry sopranos. It's bold without being aggressive, a bright red jazzed with cool spice.

**2017 Peumo Carmín de Peumo Peumo Vineyard Carmenère (\$200, 93 points)**

This is a selection from Concha y Toro's best site for the variety, a vineyard on the north bank of the Cachapoal River planted in 1987 with cuttings from pre-phylloxera vines. The 2017 is structured and silken, with cool jasmine scents deepening to rose as the flavors dive into brisk and lovely juice.



# Wine & Spirits

# TOP 100 WINES OF 2020

IT MIGHT NOT SOUND LIKE A hardship, but tasting 9,200 wines over the course of a year keeps our team of editors pretty well saturated with grape juice. What makes it worthwhile is when a wine lights up the tasting panel—one that inspires a conversation, a volley of pairing suggestions or just silence as we grope for words to describe the feeling it brings. Out of thousands of wines, the 100 in the pages that follow are the ones we are most excited to share with you. They hail from talented growers in places both familiar and little known, from winemakers working to present the identity of the place in a way that only adds to the wine's delicious flavor.

We hope you'll enjoy them as much as we did.

—PATRICK J. COMISKEY, JOSHUA GREENE, STEPHANIE JOHNSON,  
RACHEL DELROCCO TERRAZAS AND TARA Q. THOMAS.

ing southwest, toward the Van Duzer Corridor winds, on shallow basalt soils (“rocky as f\*\*!” says winemaker Ken Pahlow). It is a haunting wine, with scents of licorice, cinnamon, allspice and tea, all of it channeled through vibrant red-cherry and raspberry flavors, with a diaphanous tension and lightness that’s astonishing. Pahlow made some spectacular wines in 2018, and Sojeau may end up being the most complex and lasting. One taster named it Prince, for its binary sensuality, yin-and-yang expression of power and delicacy and its virtuoso fruit and its haunting savor. —P.J.C. (*W&S* 10/20; 450 cases)

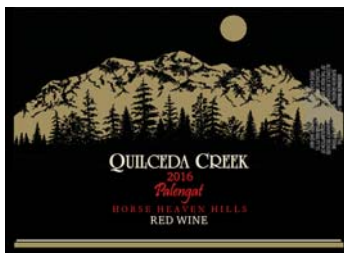


**96 | Rose & Arrow** \$150  
**2018 Eola-Amity Hills Hopewell Hills Gathered Stones Pinot Noir** Hopewell Hills is a shallow-soiled fragment of fractured stone in the basalt structure of the Eola Hills. In 2018, it produced a wine like no other I’ve ever tasted from Oregon. It has a vigorous spiciness when first poured, a series of reductive aromas of tar and rail ties and oil that fall away one by one, revealing, by day two, a wine of stunning complexity and fulsome flavor. That industrial savor becomes a background the fruit rests on like a dancer on a stage. By day three, the wine’s aromas are explosive, reminiscent of a spice bazaar—cardamom, ginger, chai and cacao, all wound around expansive, pure cherry fruit. A bravura performance. —P.J.C. (*W&S* 10/20; 125 cases)

**95 | Bergström** \$85  
**2018 Chehalem Mountains Winery Block Pinot Noir** This comes from a two-acre vineyard adjacent to Josh Bergström’s winery on Calkins Lane, the vines spaced so close that he’s farmed it by hand since 2005. It’s a wine of exceptional purity and grace, from its brambly crushed-raspberry scent to the modest peppery spice that comes from whole-bunch pressing and the joyous fruit, ripe and succulent, with a powder-coating of fine tannins. It is so captivating I’d recommend opening it now, even though it’s built to age. —P.J.C. (*W&S* 10/20; 240 cases)

## WASHINGTON RED

### BEST CABERNET BLEND



**95 | Quilceda Creek** \$150  
**2016 Horse Heaven Hills Palengat** Palengat is a south-facing parcel that’s adjacent to Champoux Vineyard, one of the original vineyards in the Horse Heaven Hills. A blend of 83 percent cabernet sauvignon, 11 percent merlot and the balance cabernet franc, this has a slightly cooler feel than the winery’s Red Mountain wines: It has plenty of succulent fruit, but also more savor, more woody notes, more sagebrush garrigue in the aromas. And the texture, like the fine grit of windblown sand, offsets the fruit and brings the wine into a quiet balance. Indeed, without all the Red Mountain girth, the effect is awesome and vast, like an open plain under a twilight sky. Smoke a lamb shoulder, uncork, and savor. —P.J.C. (*W&S* 10/20)

### BEST SYRAH

**95 | W.T. Vintners** \$49  
**2017 Walla Walla Valley Damavian Les Collines Vineyard Syrah** The 2017 Damavian is just as impressive as the 2016, reflecting, for starters, the consistency of Jeff Lindsay-Thorsen’s winemaking, which is gentle and hands-off, a healthy rendering of whole clusters, cool, ambient-yeast fermentations. This is a very cool expression of Les Collines, tense and endlessly flavorful, with notes of blackberries and peppercorn, violets and smoke, all coming in generous, luscious waves. It feels elegant and seamless, poised between assertive flavors and delicate structure. —P.J.C. (*W&S* 10/20; 385 cases)

## ARGENTINA RED

### BEST MALBEC

**96 | Weinert** \$240  
**1994 Mendoza Estrella Malbec** Brazilian businessman Bernard Weinert founded this winery in 1975, purchasing a dilapidated 19th-century cellar and hiring winemaker Raúl de la Mota to help him rejuvenate it. In 1977,

they released the first vintage of Estrella, a barrel-aged malbec of uncommon finesse and complexity that sent waves through the wine world. This 1994—made by de la Mota before his retirement, and then shepherded through 16 years of barrel-aging by Hubert Weber—should send waves through the wine world today: After all, how many other Argentine malbecs could age so well? Made from fruit handpicked off vines that were 60 years old at the time, fermented in epoxy-lined cement tanks and aged in large, neutral French-oak casks, it’s astoundingly alive: It has the rich, earthy scent of freshly turned soil, with notes of mint and tobacco adding finesse; the fruit feels plump and chocolatey, even as its red shades have taken on the caramel and apricot hues of age. It’s an entirely different vision of malbec than today’s purple beauties, and one well worth reinstating. —T.Q.T. (*W&S* 10/20) *Broadbent Selections, Richmond, VA*

### BEST RED BLEND



**95 | Trapiche** \$70  
**2015 Mendoza Iscay Malbec & Cabernet Franc** Cabernet franc grown in La Consulta infuses this wine with verve. Thirty percent of the blend, it’s there in the wine’s spicy scent—in the tang of tobacco leaves and the crunch of green herbs—as well as in its tannins, a little more angular and pointed than is typical of malbec. Those aspects keep the wine feeling fresh and elegant even as age has begun to turn its rich red fruit toward caramel, earth and roasted red pepper tones. It’s approachable now, but it also has enough structure and freshness to warrant more aging. —T.Q.T. (*W&S* 10/20) *The Wine Group, Ripon, CA*

## ARMENIA WHITE

## BEST CHILAR

**93 | Zorah** \$90  
**2018 Armenia Heritage Chilar** In Zorik Ghabarian's quest to revive Armenia's rich viticultural traditions, he's launched Heritage, a series of wines dedicated to forgotten indigenous grapes. This first release is made from chilar, a green grape with waxy, firm skins that he found in old plantings, where it was interspersed with the more common areni. Fermented with ambient yeasts and aged in *karasi*, Armenia's traditional clay vessels, it spent two months on the skins, gaining a rich, smooth texture. It smells curious at first, like raw oats (or maybe clay), but it blossoms on the palate, notes of orange flowers and juicy peach flesh deepening into roasted-pecan richness. It's opulent and mouthfilling, with enough stony minerality to keep it savory, and enough acidity to keep it clean. It lasts for days after the bottle is opened, too, boding well for future development. Pour it with roast monkfish or a pork chop, or simply a bowl of mixed nuts. —T.Q.T. (*W&S* 4/20) *Garber & Co., Los Angeles, CA*

## AUSTRALIA WHITE

## BEST CHARDONNAY

**95 | Joshua Cooper** \$60  
**2018 Macedon Ranges The Old Port Rich Chardonnay** Joshua Cooper grew up at his family's vineyard, Cobaw Ridge, a high-altitude site in the Macedon Ranges that his parents farm under biodynamics. In 2012, he started using their facilities to make his own wines, purchasing grapes from neighbors who shared a farming philosophy. This wine comes from some of the first chardonnay planted in the region, the vines now 36 years old, growing in Cambrian soils with patches of granite at an altitude close to 2,000 feet. The concentration of the fruit, at 1.4 tons per acre, sets up the initial dark-toned flavor, a complex mix of struck match, malt, rice and orange spice. With air, a youthful energy takes over, delivering fresh flavors of peach fuzz, tart apricot and lasting chamomile savor. It's a substantial wine that feels sprightly and keeps getting better over the course of a week. Regrettably, there are only 125 cases for the world. If you find some, cellar it. —J.G. (*W&S* 10/20) *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*

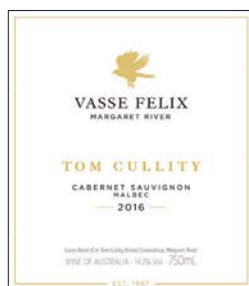
## AUSTRALIA RED

## BEST GRENACHE



**94 | Yangarra Estate** \$100  
**2016 McLaren Vale High Sands Grenache** The Smart family planted grenache at the highest point in their Blewitt Springs vineyard in 1946, where the deep sands restrict the vigor of the vines as well as the amount of fruit they yield. Now owned by Sonoma's Jackson family, the vines are dry farmed by Michael Lane, who works under biodynamics. Winemaker Peter Fraser destems it, keeping half as whole berries, then ferments it spontaneously in open-top vats and ages the wine in used French oak barrels. It's a complete wine, offering a completely different perspective on grenache to a Rayas fan, with the kind of textural pleasure that will satisfy (or create) a fan of McLaren grenache. It's elegant, tense and floral, with crunchy red berry flavors and fine, persistent tannins: a powerful young wine with years of development ahead. —J.G. (*W&S* 2/20) *Sovereign Wine Imports, Santa Rosa, CA*

## BEST CABERNET BLEND



**95 | Vasse Felix** \$165  
**2016 Margaret River Tom Cullity** This wine is dedicated to the founder of Vasse Felix, one of the pioneering growers in Margaret River; the vines Virginia Willcock farms for this wine are descendants of the cabernet sauvignon and malbec Tom Cullity planted in 1968. Ocean currents meet red and black currants in this smooth and luscious blend, engaging for its voluptuous texture as well as its splash of colorful fruit. There's an under-

tow taking you deeper into red cherry and pomegranate, leaving you in the midst of succulent tannins, receding slowly into addictive freshness that immediately brings you back for more. Or so it did for me. This is an Aussie cabernet with elegance, one with decades of life ahead. —J.G. (*W&S* 10/20) *Negotiants USA/Winebow Imports, NY*

## BEST SHIRAZ



**95 | Penfolds** \$150  
**2016 South Australia St. Henri Shiraz** There's no new wood to get in the way of St. Henri's blackberry freshness—the wine, developed by John Davoren in the 1950s, presented Penfolds' top-level shiraz matured in large, neutral oak vats rather than the hogsheads Max Schubert was using for Grange. The 2016 is fragrant with dark fruit that seems to slow time—associate editor Corey Warren compared it to bullet time in *The Matrix*. Meanwhile, the gentle texture has a silken touch, even as the wine is super-concentrated. A remarkable vintage of St. Henri that will age for decades. —J.G. (*W&S* 2/20) *Treasury Wine Estates, Napa, CA*

## AUSTRALIA DESSERT

## BEST MUSCAT

**96 | Chambers Rosewood** \$350  
**Rutherglen Rare Muscat** The Chambers family has been growing grapes in Rutherglen since 1858, maintaining a stock of fortified wine in casks that they treat like a solera. Steve Chambers, the family's winemaker since 2001, pulls his Rare Muscat from barrels filled with wine that's more than a century old. Having put his Rutherglen stickies aside for a month between tasting them and writing them up, I found the freshness of this Rare Muscat, in particular, seemed turbocharged by that interlude. Unlike some of the other ancient wines from Chambers's cellars, this has none of the crypt and all of the autumn sunshine, its vibrancy and supple textures gaining ground after a month, even if the initial scents of roses are gone. —J.G. (*W&S* 10/20) *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*



# Wine & Spirits

# TOP 100

## BEST BUYS OF 2020

THE MORE YOU KNOW ABOUT WINE, the less you have to spend to drink well—and these 100 wines prove it. Each of them is a knock out, especially when compared to other wines from the same region at significantly higher prices. They range from an \$11 Vinho Verde to a \$65 Brunello di Montalcino; more than half cost \$20 or less, including a 96-point Montsant and a 94-point Tokaji. Whether you're looking for Barolo or Burgundy, West Coast cabernet or Willamette chardonnay, you'll find great choices in this list. We've arranged it by country, starting with the US, by state and variety, then moving through the rest of the world by region. Patrick J. Comiskey, Joshua Greene, Stephanie Johnson, Rachel DelRocco Terrazas and Tara Q. Thomas provide the reviews.

*For our Best of the Year for \$12 or less, head to page 104.*

### UNITED STATES

#### CALIFORNIA WHITE

##### CHARDONNAYS

**93 | I. Brand** \$30  
**2018 Santa Lucia Highlands Escolle Vineyard Chardonnay** Tightly wound when first uncorked, this wine is all lemon peel and lees. Then, when it relaxes, it's like an exposed live wire, electric and lean. You can feel the tension in its mouthwatering energy, in its graceful lines and precise, mineral finish. It's a whisper-clean performance for bracingly fresh fish, like rainbow trout fresh out of the stream. —P.J.C. (W&S 10/20; 250 cases)

**92 | BonAnno** \$18  
**2018 Los Carneros Chardonnay** Matt Bonanno was working at Union Beverage in Chicago when he started his own wine label in 2004, working to create value-focused wines in Napa Valley. This one hits the mark, a smooth, supple chardonnay with crunchy

grape flavors and a muscular scallop-like fattiness to the fruit. It's salty, rich and a steal at \$18. —J.G. (W&S 10/20; 2,000 cases)

**92 | Rodney Strong** \$22  
**2017 Chalk Hill Chardonnay** Rod Strong first planted chardonnay in the white volcanic soils of Chalk Hill in 1965, and this estate-grown wine carries a memory of that chalky soil in its mineral freshness and apple-skin spice. It's clean and powerful, that power driven by some reduction that keeps the wine tight. Give it time in a decanter to open up, then serve as an aperitif with poached prawns. —J.G. (W&S 4/20)

**91 | Raymond** \$20  
**2017 Napa Valley Reserve Selection Chardonnay** With its scents of orange blossoms and gardenias, this smells like a flower garden in June, earthy and floral underneath, layered with creamy vanilla notes and some relieving bitterness of oak tannins. It feels spicy and cool, built for a lemony roast chicken. —J.G. (W&S 4/20).

### MUSCAT



**90 | Bonterra** \$16  
**2018 Mendocino County Blue Heron Vineyard Dry Muscat** Joseph Brinkley at Bonterra farms these muscat vines under biodynamics, delivering fruit that can stand naked, in a completely dry style. And it's delicious to taste a dry muscat with this much lemony bitterness and citrusy freshness. It feels honest, a lovely summer refreshment. —J.G. (W&S 6/20; 250 cases)

cherry flavors, satisfying and balanced; for a chicken braise. —P.J.C. (W&S 8/20; 478 cases)

## OREGON RED

**93 | Keeler Estate** \$28  
**2017 Eola-Amity Hills Heart Pinot Noir**  
 With scents of clove and mulled spices, this delivers its flavors in waves of richness, the dark, sumptuous fruit pulsing and precise, notes of ripe cherry, blueberry and olive drawing to a savory finish with bay laurel-scented tannins. Impressive for the price. —P.J.C. (W&S 4/20; 426 cases)

## WASHINGTON ROSE

**93 | Gramercy Cellars** \$22  
**2019 Columbia Valley Olsen Vineyard Rosé**  
 Greg Harrington channels Provence in this bracing single-vineyard blend of cinsault, grenache and syrah. A pale onion-skin hue, the wine spent four months on the lees, lending it a nutty and biscuity complexity and breadth. With a sharp cut of acidity, it holds an impressive tension, even after two days open. Pour this with a light meal, like gravlax with capers on a fresh baguette. —P.J.C. (W&S 8/20; 500 cases)

## WASHINGTON RED

### CABERNET SAUVIGNON

**93 | Upchurch** \$30  
**2017 Red Mountain Larger Than Life Cabernet Sauvignon**  
 LTL, a new brand from DeLille's Chris Upchurch, is off to a running start with this cabernet, with rich and powerful Red Mountain character, dark notes of black plum and chocolatey, fine-grained tannins. It over delivers for the price, especially with lamb shoulder. —P.J.C. (W&S 12/19; 925 cases)

### CABERNET BLEND

**93 | Longship** \$36  
**2017 Columbia Valley Quinn Red Blend**  
 A blend of malbec, merlot and cabernet, this has a classic Bordeaux scent of cedar and plum, the malbec adding a violet bouquet. The flavors are at once plush and sleek, buoyed by a seductive, purple-fruited core of fruit and fine claylike tannins. Proceeds from the sale of this wine go to a cystic fibrosis fund called "All In for Quinn." —P.J.C. (W&S 6/20; 150 cases)

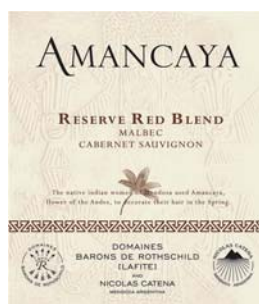
## SYRAH

**94 | Gramercy Cellars** \$25  
**2017 Columbia Valley Lower East Syrah**  
 This is from Greg Harrington's tier of wines meant to broaden the winery's regional reach to the Columbia Valley. The blend comes from Les Collines, Forgotten Hills and Holy Roller vineyards—the latter a new parcel owned by Chris Figgins, in The Rocks. The wine leads with scents of mocha and olive—the Rocks showing its stuff—while the flavors feel a bit warmer, with a seductively plush texture, limned by violet-and-rosemary-scented tannins. Drinking beautifully now; serve with lamb. —P.J.C. (W&S 6/20; 1,500 cases)

**89 | Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$15  
**2017 Columbia Valley Syrah**  
 This offers impressive complexity at the price, with scents of licorice and smoked meat, sumptuous oak flavors and sleek fruit. Buy by the case for outdoor parties. —P.J.C. (W&S 2/20)

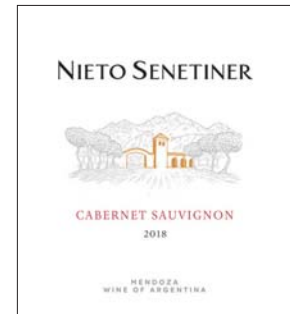
## ARGENTINA RED

**93 | Bodegas de los Clop** \$20  
**2016 Agrelo Luján de Cuyo Reserva Malbec**  
 This is light on its feet and dark in flavor, with black-pepper spice and meaty cherry flavors. It feels Old World in its savor, with green-herb notes playing around the edges, and gripping tannins. —T.Q.T. (W&S 10/20) *Orvino Imports & Distributing, Coral Springs, FL*



**93 | Caro** \$21  
**2017 Mendoza Amancaya Reserve**  
 The partnership between Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite) and Catena, launched in 1999, produces this "second" wine with a higher proportion of malbec and less time in oak barrels than the flagship wine (also recommended here). In 2017, Amancaya is the more elegant of the two. The blend includes 33 percent cabernet sauvignon and spends a year in barrels (20 percent new): It's smoky, dark and earthy, with fine cocoa-pow-

der tannins giving the violet-scented fruit a lithe line. —T.Q.T. (W&S 10/20) *Taub Family Selections, Boca Raton, FL*



**92 | Nieto Senetiner** \$15  
**2018 Mendoza Cabernet Sauvignon**  
 This is firm and balanced, delivering beefy berry flavors with firm, fine tannins, bright, fresh acidity and radish-like spice. Stock up on it for barbecue season. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Foley Family Artisan Imports, Santa Rosa, CA*

## AUSTRALIA WHITE

**92 | Cullen** \$20  
**2018 Margaret River Wilyabrup Dancing in the Sun**  
 This is a dry-grown blend of sauvignon blanc and semillon (with a little verdelho) from Vanya Cullen's biodynamically farmed vineyard near the coast in Wilyabrup. There's no oak to get in the way of this wine's lovely fruit, the crunchy nectarine and kumquat flavors held tight, with a whisper of underlying creaminess at the liminal space between the earth and the sea. —J.G. (W&S 10/20) *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

## AUSTRALIA RED

### GRENA CHE

**92 | Alpha Box & Dice** \$20  
**2018 McLaren Vale Tarot**  
 Sam Berketa blends this wine from two vineyards, most of it destemmed and inoculated with cultured yeast, ten percent fermented as whole clusters with ambient yeasts. It ages together for six months in tank, emerging a bit oxygen starved and reduced, with the green leafiness of persimmon and the tart red fruit of sour plums. That fruit is almost more pink than red, layered and funky, with plenty of structural integrity. The flavor impact is lasting, an intriguing grenache for duck prosciutto and other cured meats. —J.G. (W&S 2/20) *AB&D, Carmel, CA*

## RED BLEND

**93 | d'Arenberg** \$29  
**2015 McLaren Vale Sticks and Stones** Iberian grapes thrive in McLaren Vale's contemporary climate, this blend being a prime example. It combines tempranillo (60 percent) and garnacha (okay, grenache), two varieties from Rioja, with souzão and tinta cã, important grapes for blends in the Douro. It takes a svelte shape that's completely different from that of the region's shiraz, the flavors gamey and meaty, with a vibrato reverb in their smoky spice. Everyone on the panel had a different idea for what to serve with it, from spicy Iberian lamb to andouille and baked cherries, to braised oxtail ravioli with crème fraîche, Madeira and truffles. —J.G. (W&S 2/20) *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

## SHIRAZ



**92 | d'Arenberg** \$20  
**2017 McLaren Vale The Footbolt Shiraz** The Osborn family has been growing grapes for more than 100 years, ever since John Osborn sold his collection of racehorses, including Footbolt, to buy their original vineyards. During the South Australia government-sponsored vine pull of the 1980s, d'Arry Osborn and his son, Chester, bought up a lot of old vineyards and continue to preserve them today. The Footbolt includes fruit from vines aged 20 to 100 years, traditionally fermented and blended into a supple, black-fruited wine of gentle power. Umami undertones of roasted meat and mushrooms warm the tannins, while the clean, rich fruit lasts. This will bring some sophistication to a cookout. —J.G. (W&S 2/20) *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

## AUSTRIA WHITE

## GRUNER VELTLINER

**93 | Forstreiter** \$23  
**2017 Kremstal Ried Schiefer Reserve Grüner Veltliner** Schiefer is an old vineyard nestled into the side of the Schiffberg,

a high outcropping with a clear view to the ships (*schiffe*) sailing the Danube. The warm, protected site produced a rich wine in 2017, a gentle robe of honey wrapping around zesty notes of grapefruit and herbs. It feels elegant and harmonious, so drinkable you might miss the complexity it holds. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman & Sons, NY*

**93 | Rutenstock** \$23  
**2017 Weinviertel Ried Reipersberg Grüner Veltliner** Mattias Rutenstock farms 44.5 acres around his home base in Röschitz, including a parcel of 55-year-old vines planted in the granite soils of the Reipersberg vineyard. In 2017, those vines produced a veltliner that dances with energy. It's bright and buoyant, with a hint of spritz boosting the lemon-lime flavors; notes of wintergreen and crunchy green beans add to the sense of cool freshness. You might want to buy this by the case for summertime drinking; it will uplift all manner of salads. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Artisanal Cellars, NY*

## ZIERFANDLER

**90 | Stadlmann** \$18  
**2018 Thermenregion Anning Zierfandler** Johann Stadlmann cultivates some of the last remaining plots of zierfandler in Thermenregion, culling the fruit for this wine from his younger vines on the Anning hill. The 2018 is a particularly pretty example, with honeysuckle scents and fresh, crisp lemon acidity. The middle of the wine has substance to it that one panelist compared to humidity, another to soft water; it's an umami note that creates a sense of fullness without weight. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman & Sons, NY*

## AUSTRIA RED

## PINOT NOIR

**95 | Forstreiter** \$24  
**2016 Niederösterreich Reserve Pinot Noir** "Pinot noir in a motorcycle jacket," said Michael Dolinski, who mans the all-Austrian wine list at *Wallsé* in NYC. As for my notes, they read, "I just want to drink this." Meinhard Forstreiter culls his best pinot noir, as well as some fruit from friends in the Kremstal, fermenting this wine in stainless-steel tanks before sending it into barriques (half new) for 12 months or more. In 2016—a wet year, but free of heatwaves—the wine came out gloriously spicy, smelling like a forest after a rain, with translucent dried-cherry fla-

vors. Notes of coffee and brisket fill out the bass line, the wine feeling full but not heavy, sturdy yet elegant. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman & Sons, NY*

## ZWEIGELT

**91 | Handwerk** \$17  
**2017 Niederösterreich Handwerk Weingartensektion Zweigelt** Netzl makes this label for Monika Caha, a former chef in NYC who's now an importer. It's a serious zweigelt, with tannins and bright acidity to support the variety's brambly blue fruit, and some smoke and spice for detail. It's priced to pour as an everyday wine, but this would stand up to roast duck or a dry-aged steak. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman & Sons, NY*

## CANADA SPARKLING



**91 | 13th Street Winery** \$25  
**2017 Creek Shores Blanc de Blanc** Jean-Pierre Colas fermented this chardonnay in stainless steel tanks, then suppressed malolactic to retain the primary fruit character and acidity. Made with grapes harvested at 18.5° Brix and bottled with just five grams per liter of residual sugar, it's an extreme sparkler—some of our tasters even found it a little masochistic. Others (including myself) found it invigorating, like a dip in a cold pool, the chill of the acidity giving the flavors a glassy clarity. It tastes white—white pear flesh, lemon pith, chalk—with a pleasant edge of bitterness. Use it like a knife, to cut through the flesh of a sweet, fat sautéed scallop. —T.Q.T. (W&S 4/20) *Esber Beverage Co., Canton, OH*